CAPPADOCIA UNIVERSITY
Logic - Wisdom - Equality - Tradition

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS • ANNUAL REPORT

From local food to shared prosperity.

SDG 2 / ZERO HUNGER



An annual account of sustainable agriculture, food knowledge, producer partnerships and responsible gastronomy.

Cappadocia University | Reporting Period: 2025



Local producers, sustainable food practices and community food knowledge in Cappadocia.

2025 • CAPPADOCIA UNIVERSITY • ENGLISH EDITION

THE 2025 STORY

Food, knowledge and community resilience

We connect regional producers with consumers, advance food research and place sustainable gastronomy at the centre of community engagement.

During 2025, we developed food-system partnerships that brought small-scale producers, researchers, students and local communities into closer contact. A central achievement was the opening of the Cappadocia–Uçhisar Slow Food Earth Market on 24 May 2025. Through this initiative, our University supported direct access to regional products, the visibility of women producers, agricultural knowledge exchange and the conservation of food heritage.

Our contribution also encompassed international dialogue during Turkish Cuisine Week, the establishment of our Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Application and Research Centre (GASTROMER), a research congress and peer-reviewed publications on food waste, preservation and the environmental sustainability of meals. Together, these activities connected community food networks with education and applied scientific knowledge.

2025 at a glance

24	40	2
EARTH MARKET	**TARSUS DELEGATION**	**KAPGTAK DAYS**
May 2025 · Uçhisar	17 April 2025	24–25 April 2025

Our food-system priorities

Community production	Research and education	Food and resource stewardship
Direct producer–consumer exchange; regional foods and short supply chains	GASTROMER, KAPGTAK and public learning with agricultural partners	Food-waste research, nutritional menu assessment, safer preservation and sustainable cultivation

INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH

A university connected to regional food systems

Our academic programmes and local partnerships bring the knowledge of Cappadocia into sustainable food education and community practice.

Our University grew from Cappadocia Vocational College, established in 2005, and gained university status in 2017. Our practice-oriented teaching and applied research approach connects academic learning with the realities of the communities around our campuses. Cappadocia's agricultural traditions, food heritage and rural economies provide a living setting for this work.

Our 2023–2028 Strategic Plan and Environmental and Sustainability Policy establish a shared institutional direction for responsible resource use, community contribution and education. Our Gastronomy and Culinary Arts programmes, Sustainability Office and research centres translate these priorities into training, research, events and partnerships involving producers, public bodies and industry.



Figure 1. Our historic campus environment in Cappadocia connects teaching and community activity with a region recognised for its culinary, agricultural and cultural heritage.

LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

The Cappadocia–Uçhisar Slow Food Earth Market

Our market initiative supports food diversity, direct producer–consumer relationships and the continuity of local production traditions.

We developed the Cappadocia–Uçhisar Slow Food Earth Market in cooperation with the Ahiler Development Agency and the Ministry of Industry and Technology, supported through the 2024 Social Development Support Programme (SOGEP). The project protocol was signed on 11 February 2025, and the market opened on 24 May 2025 at Kadıneli Restaurant's garden in Uçhisar. It joined Slow Food's international Earth Markets network.

The market promotes the principles of good, clean and fair food. It brings small-scale growers and makers into direct contact with customers, with a focus on regional products, transparent production, biodiversity and the knowledge embedded in traditional food practices. The biweekly market model combines product exchange with food education, workshops and community engagement.



Figure 2. Local producers, residents and visitors meet at the Cappadocia–Uçhisar Slow Food Earth Market in 2025. The market opened on 24 May with a model centred on regional foods and direct producer–consumer interaction.

From local food to wider participation

Across its early programme, the Earth Market created opportunities for producers to introduce products, share cultivation and preparation practices and learn from one another. Our collaboration with producer groups and Slow Food partners enabled academic, community and professional perspectives to meet in a common setting, making the market a continuing part of our regional engagement.

PRODUCER PARTNERSHIPS

Learning and cooperation across Earth Markets

Exchange with established markets helps local producers strengthen practical knowledge and relationships.

On 17 April 2025, a 40-person delegation from the Cappadocia–Uçhisar initiative visited the Slow Food Earth Market in Tarsus. Women producers made up the majority of the group, which also included our Gastronomy and Culinary Arts academic staff. Participants explored how producers are organised, how local products are presented and how the principles of good, clean and fair food are put into practice in a functioning market.

The visit connected local producers with peers who had experience in direct sales, product selection and collective market organisation. By combining an on-site demonstration with academic support, we helped translate a regional food-system model into practical learning for Cappadocia.



Figure 3. The 40-person Cappadocia delegation visited the Slow Food Earth Market in Tarsus on 17 April 2025. The group included predominantly women producers and University academics who exchanged knowledge about local food markets and producer organisation.

Learning across the food supply chain

We also supported producer-facing learning activities addressing cultivation methods, pesticide use, organic matter and the links between agricultural inputs and environmental quality. These activities extended the market's purpose beyond sales into the skills and practices that underpin sustainable local food production.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Practical learning for healthier production

Our 2025 public programme connected agricultural expertise with soil health, resource stewardship and local food knowledge.

The market's summer programme included agricultural sessions on pesticide-free farming and natural pest-control preparations, scheduled for 19 July 2025 with agricultural engineer Yunus Sezer. Additional sessions in the second half of the year addressed reducing agricultural plastics, making compost and regenerative approaches to cultivation. These activities brought technical subjects into public discussions relevant to rural growers and small-scale food production.

2025 activity	Date	Food-system relevance
Pesticide-free agriculture and natural pesticide preparation	19 July	Alternative crop-care practices and environmental health
Plastic-free farming and compost-making activities	30 August	Reducing agricultural inputs and returning organic matter to soil
Regenerative agriculture: principles and examples	8 November	Soil stewardship, production resilience and ecological cultivation
Earth Market learning exchange in Tarsus	17 April	Producer cooperation and direct-market organisation



Figure 4. Producers and project participants gathered in connection with the Slow Food Earth Market network in 2025. Market visits and agricultural learning activities linked community production with practical exchange.

Our regional food-system work connects agricultural practices with the preservation of traditional knowledge and with the participation of small producers in community markets. Training and exchange activities also complement the research and public education undertaken through our academic programmes.

FOOD CULTURE AND PUBLIC LEARNING

Turkish Cuisine Week and international Slow Food dialogue

We brought global food-system perspectives into conversation with Cappadocia's regional traditions.

During Turkish Cuisine Week in May 2025, our University hosted seminars and exchanges on food sustainability, biodiversity, cultural heritage and agroecological production. The programme involved Slow Food President Edward Mukiibi, international leaders including Marta Messa, academics and regional partners. Approximately 50 international representatives from 23 countries were hosted in Cappadocia during 21–26 May 2025.

On 22 May, discussions at the Ürgüp Factory Campus examined food sustainability as a global responsibility, the safeguarding of cultural and biological diversity and approaches to agroecological farming. These public events placed the knowledge of growers and food communities alongside international perspectives, leading into the Earth Market opening on 24 May.



Figure 5. Slow Food representatives and University speakers discuss agroecological agriculture and regional food systems during the May 2025 programme. International participation connected local food heritage with wider questions of biodiversity and sustainable cultivation.

Learning through gastronomy

Our Gastronomy and Culinary Arts teaching also examined responsible ingredient selection, local culinary traditions and the relationship between food and cultural identity. At the Uçhisar Art Campus discussion on 21 April 2025, participants considered the role of regional cuisine and responsible production in future gastronomy practices. Student and public engagement during the year widened these conversations beyond formal classrooms.

RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC EXCHANGE

Building capacity for food research

Our 2025 research development linked scientific gastronomy with biodiversity, innovation and regional production.

Our Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Application and Research Centre (GASTROMER) was established in 2025. The Centre brings together research on culinary heritage, regional food resources and scientific innovation, strengthening cooperation among academic disciplines and between the University, producers and food-sector partners. Its activities provide a dedicated institutional framework for long-term study of sustainable food systems.

On 24–25 April 2025, we convened the Cappadocia Gastronomy, Food and Tourism Research Congress (KAPGTAK 2025). The congress brought researchers and practitioners together around sustainable agriculture, food technologies, gastronomy and cultural heritage. Edited by Ali Ilgaz, the congress proceedings were published by Cappadocia University Press in August 2025 and promoted through an institutional announcement on 6 October.



Figure 6. Participants at KAPGTAK 2025, held on 24–25 April. The congress created a multidisciplinary forum for scholarly discussion on food, gastronomy and the wider regional economy.

A lasting scholarly output

The KAPGTAK 2025 proceedings, Cappadocia University Press publication no. 114 (ISBN 978-625-96451-8-6), brought research on food production, gastronomy, tourism and technological innovation into an accessible academic volume. The publication extended the congress discussions into a resource for students, researchers and food-sector professionals.

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

Research on food quality, waste and sustainability

Our researchers contributed peer-reviewed work on menu quality, food-loss prevention and environmentally responsible food technologies.

Research published in 2025 addressed several interrelated aspects of the food system: preventing edible food from becoming waste, improving the nutritional and sensory quality of meals, assessing the resource demands of catering menus and exploring preservation technologies using food by-products. These publications connect our gastronomy and nutrition expertise to challenges facing contemporary food production and consumption.

2025 publication	Journal and bibliographic record	Research contribution
Demir Özer et al., “Determination of the Amount of Food Waste and Improving Meals to Reduce Food Waste in the University Refectory”	Aydın Gastronomy, 9(1), 43–57 (January 2025)	Food-waste measurement, menu improvements and nutrition awareness
Kip, Serçe Sarıtaş, Kaldırım and Aytekin Şahin, “Gıda kaybı ve israfında güncel durum ve azaltma stratejileri”	Food and Health, 11(2), 186–196 (2025); DOI 10.3153/FH25015	Research synthesis on food loss and waste-reduction strategies
Özer, Demir Özer and Başdoğan, “Sustainability in the industrial catering menus: Nutritional and environmental impact assessment”	Journal of Industrial Ecology, 29, 1013–1021 (2025); DOI 10.1111/jiec.70035	Nutritional assessment together with water and carbon footprints of catering menus
Sari Gencag, Kahraman and Ekici, “Green synthesis of silver nanoparticles from pomegranate peel and their application in PVA-based nanofibers for coating minced meat”	Scientific Reports, 15, 17083 (2025); DOI 10.1038/s41598-025-95349-4	Recovery of a fruit-processing by-product for food-preservation research

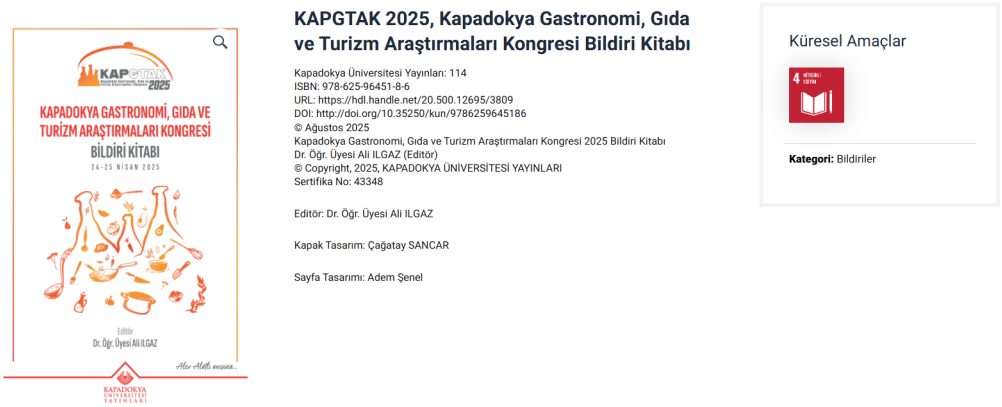


Figure 7. The KAPGTAK 2025 proceedings, edited by Ali Ilgaz and published by Cappadocia University Press in 2025, consolidate work on food, gastronomy, agriculture and tourism research.

FOOD QUALITY AND RESOURCE USE

Improving meals and preventing food waste

Research on menu design and dietary awareness informs more responsible food service practices.

Our research in Aydın Gastronomy (2025) examined food waste and meal quality in a university refectory. The study, led by Ezgi Demir Özer with colleagues, analysed measurements collected between December 2020 and August 2021, including meal satisfaction, nutritional knowledge and plate waste. Recipe standardisation, improvements in the texture, colour and flavour of dishes, and educational materials were used to support a more responsive catering service.

The published findings reported significant reductions in plate waste for soups, main dishes and second courses following menu changes, alongside higher satisfaction and improved awareness of food waste. The results show how nutritional education and practical kitchen adjustments can be brought together to make institutional meals more acceptable and reduce unnecessary losses.



Figure 8. Food preparation, meal service and plate leftovers illustrate the practical stages examined in our 2025 published study on food waste and university refectory meal improvement. The study analysed earlier data collected in 2020–2021.

Sustainable catering and preservation research

A 2025 Journal of Industrial Ecology study involving Ezgi Demir Özer assessed 30 frequently served institutional lunch menus and the nutritional and environmental impacts of different dishes. Research published in Scientific Reports by Burcu Sari Gencag and collaborators investigated pomegranate peel as a source of materials for food-preservation coatings. Together with the review on food-loss reduction in

Food and Health, these studies broaden our scientific contribution from menu planning to ingredient recovery and product quality.

COMMUNITY FOOD ENGAGEMENT

Food knowledge and public participation

Community activities strengthen connections between producers, food culture and more sustainable consumption.

In March 2025, our student-led Vera Community organised a Ramadan food-parcel assistance activity. Recorded in our 2024–2025 Sustainability Activity Report on 26 March, this initiative contributed to community solidarity around food needs. We also brought food-related learning into public settings through the Earth Market, sustainable agriculture activities and open discussions on local production.

In 2025, the University's Kitchen Friends student community marked International Day of Zero Waste with a cooking activity that reused ingredients in practical recipes. This student-led activity connected food knowledge with the prevention of avoidable waste, complementing the academic work on responsible catering and food-loss reduction.



Figure 9. Local products and small-scale producers represented at the Cappadocia–Uçhisar Earth Market in 2025. The range of food products illustrates how regional production and culinary traditions are presented directly to visitors.

Recognition of the Earth Market

On 13 December 2025, the Cappadocia–Uçhisar Earth Market received the "Institution Adding Value to Cappadocia" award at the 2025 Cappadocia Value Awards organised by the Nevşehir Journalists' Association. The recognition highlighted the collective work of the market's producers, partners and our University in promoting local production, cultural heritage and sustainable community life.

2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

A year of tangible food-system cooperation

From the first Earth Market opening to research publications and producer education, our 2025 programme united community activity with academic work.

Date	Activity	Contribution
11 February 2025	SOGEP Earth Market project protocol	Formal partnership for a regional producer market
17 April 2025	Tarsus Earth Market visit: 40-person delegation	Peer learning and producer networks
24–25 April 2025	KAPGTAK research congress	Interdisciplinary food and gastronomy research
22–24 May 2025	Slow Food seminars and Turkish Cuisine Week	International dialogue on food sustainability
24 May 2025	Cappadocia–Uçhisar Earth Market opened	Direct channel between local producers and consumers
July–November 2025	Agriculture and food-system learning activities	Knowledge exchange on cultivation and resource use
August / October 2025	KAPGTAK proceedings published and announced	Academic publication and public research access
13 December 2025	Earth Market received regional institutional award	Recognition of producer and University collaboration

Our work in 2025 established a sustained setting for direct food exchange, strengthened connections among regional producers and contributed scientific research relevant to food quality and responsible resource use. Public programmes widened access to knowledge on sustainable agriculture and local food traditions, while the Earth Market provided a continuing community space for sharing regional products and experience.



Figure 10. The public announcement for the Cappadocia–Uçhisar Slow Food Earth Market opening on 24 May 2025. The Turkish poster reads “Yeryüzü Pazarı Açılıyor!” (“The Earth Market Opens!”) and identifies Uçhisar, Kadıneli Restaurant Garden, and the public opening at 10.00.

Relations with other Sustainable Development Goals

Our SDG 2 work is closely linked to SDG 1 through regional livelihoods and food solidarity, SDG 3 through nutritious food and food safety, SDG 4 through education and public learning, SDGs 5 and 8 through women producers and local economic participation, SDG 12 through reducing food loss and responsible consumption, SDGs 13 and 15 through sustainable cultivation and biodiversity, and SDG 17 through cooperation with Slow Food, public agencies and local communities.